

Questions and Answers about the Minnesota Department of Human Rights

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Minnesota Department of Human Rights?

The Minnesota Department of Human Rights (MDHR) is a neutral state agency that investigates charges of illegal discrimination, issues certificates of compliance to contractors that do business with the state of Minnesota, and educates people about their rights and responsibilities under the Minnesota Human Rights Act.

How long do I have to file a discrimination charge?

One year from the date the incident happened.

How long does it take the MDHR to investigate a case?

It can take up to a year from the date a charge is filed.

Do I need an attorney to file a charge with the department?

No. But you can have an attorney if you want one. You will have to hire and pay for the attorney yourself. We cannot give you legal advice.

What is the cost of filing a charge?

There is no cost.

Can I be punished if I file a discrimination charge?

It is illegal for someone to punish you—or get back at you—for filing a discrimination charge. This kind of revengeful punishment is called “reprisal.” You could file a separate charge of discrimination—this time for reprisal—against the person who is punishing you for filing the first charge.

I got a letter saying my charge has been filed with EEOC (the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission). What does this letter mean?

The MDHR is a state agency. The EEOC is a federal agency that works on employment discrimination cases. Both agencies can agree to take discrimination charges for each other. A charge is ‘cross-filed’ so that only one agency investigates the claim.

A letter about cross filing tells you how the state and federal agencies work together. You do not need to do anything about the cross filing except keep the notice for your records. You must tell both agencies if your address or phone number changes.

I got a dismissal letter from the Commissioner. I still think I was treated unfairly and want the MDHR to continue investigating my charge. What can I do?

You can ask to have your case reconsidered. You must ask for this in writing.

Are there other agencies that can help me?

Yes. Other state and federal agencies can help you with some job or housing problems.

The Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (DOLI)

DOLI is a state agency that enforces employment laws about:

- Overtime
- Employee breaks
- On-the-job injuries
- Workplace safety

If you need help about these things, you should contact them for information.

Phone: 651-284-5005 (TTY: 651-297-4198); Toll Free: 1-800-342-5354

Address: 443 Lafayette Road N., Saint Paul, MN 55155-4307

Web site: [MN Department of Labor and Industry](http://www.dli.mn.gov/main.asp)
(<http://www.dli.mn.gov/main.asp>)

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)

The EEOC investigates discrimination in the workplace. You can file a discrimination charge with EEOC or with us, and your state and federal rights will be protected by this one charge. Do not file with both agencies.

Phone: 612-335-4040 (TTY: 612-335-4045); Toll Free: 1-800-669-4000

Address: Towle Building, 330 South Second Avenue, Suite 720, Minneapolis, MN 55401-2224

Web site: [U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission](http://www.eeoc.gov/minneapolis/index.html)
(<http://www.eeoc.gov/minneapolis/index.html>)

United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

HUD enforces the federal fair housing laws. These laws are similar to the Minnesota laws that we enforce. You can file a separate charge with HUD.

Phone: 612-370-3000 (TTY: 612-370-3186)

Address: International Centre, 920 Second Avenue South, Suite 1300, Minneapolis, MN 55402-4012

Web site: [Housing and Urban Development, Minnesota](http://www.hud.gov/local/index.cfm?state=mn&topic=offices)
(<http://www.hud.gov/local/index.cfm?state=mn&topic=offices>)

What to do

If you think you are a victim of discrimination:

- Write down what happened to you if you think it was unfair.
- Write down the dates when the unfair treatment happened.
- Write down the names of other people that were there.
- Write down what the people who were there said.

Do not wait!

Sometimes it is hard to say what is discrimination and what is not discrimination—every situation is different. But if you think you are a victim of discrimination, do not wait. Contact the Minnesota Department of Human Rights immediately. You have one year after the discrimination happened to file a complaint.

How to Contact Us

We take phone calls Monday through Friday, 8:00 am to 4:30 pm

Phone: 651-539-1100 (TTY 651-296-1283); Toll free: 1-800-657-3704

You do not need an appointment to visit our office

We accept walk-ins from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm, Monday through Friday.

Our address

Minnesota Department of Human Rights
Freeman Building
625 Robert Street North
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Email address

info.MDHR@state.mn.us

If you are emailing the department about filing a charge of discrimination and do not receive a reply within five business days, please contact our intake unit by phone at 651-539-1100 (TTY 651-296-1283) or Toll Free at 1-800-657-3704.

Getting an interpreter

Interpreters may be available to communicate with our office. Call us and say, “I need a (say your language here) interpreter.”

This document is not a complete answer to your rights under the Minnesota Human Rights Act.